

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 6

Introduced by Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer

January 5, 2015

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 6—Relative to Black History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 6, as introduced, Jones-Sawyer. Black History Month.

This measure would recognize February 2015 as Black History Month, urge all citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African Americans during Black History Month, and encourage the people of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and contributions that African Americans make to their communities.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, distinguished African
- 2 American author, editor, publisher, and historian, who is known
- 3 as the “Father of Black History,” founded Negro History Week in
- 4 1926, which became Black History Month in 1976, intended to
- 5 encourage further research and publishing regarding the untold
- 6 stories of African American heritage; and
- 7 WHEREAS, The history of African Americans here in the
- 8 United States, as well as throughout the ages, is indeed unique and
- 9 vibrant, and it is appropriate to celebrate this history during the
- 10 month of February 2015, which has been proclaimed as Black
- 11 History Month; and
- 12 WHEREAS, There is even greater cause for a reverent
- 13 celebration in 2015 as Americans reflect on the significance of the

1 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, and the 50th anniversary
2 of the Selma to Montgomery Marches or “Bloody Sunday”; and

3 WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with
4 inspirational stories of great men and noble women whose actions,
5 words, and achievements have united Americans and contributed
6 to the success and prosperity of the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, The slave trade was a tragic episode in African
8 history and began before August 1619 when the first slaves arrived
9 in Jamestown, Virginia. During the course of the slave trade, an
10 estimated 50 million African men, women, and children were lost
11 to their native continent, though only about 15 million arrived
12 safely to a new home. The others lost their lives on African soil
13 or along the Guinea coast, or finally in holds on the ships during
14 the dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

15 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution
16 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March
17 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.
18 African Americans also fought in wars including the Battles of
19 Lexington and Concord in April 1775, the Battle of Rhode Island
20 on August 29, 1775, the battles of Ticonderoga, White Plains,
21 Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, Yorktown, Bunker
22 Hill, and other revolutionary war battles; the War of 1812,
23 including the Battle of New Orleans; the Civil War, the
24 Spanish-American War; World Wars I and II, Korea, and the
25 Vietnam War; and

26 WHEREAS, In spite of the African slave trade, many Africans
27 and African Americans continued to move forward in society;
28 during the Reconstruction period, two African Americans served
29 in the United States Senate and 14 sat in the House of
30 Representatives; and

31 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the
32 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes
33 and pioneers in many diverse areas, from science, medicine,
34 business, and education to government, industry, and social
35 leadership; and

36 WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have also been
37 great inventors, inventing and improving things such as the
38 air-conditioning unit, almanac, automatic gearshift, blood plasma
39 bag, clothes dryer, doorknob, doorstop, electric lamp bulb, elevator,
40 fire escape ladder, fountain pen, gas mask, golf tee, horseshoe,

1 lantern, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, lock, lubricating cup,
2 refrigerating apparatus, spark plug, stethoscope, telephone
3 transmitter, thermostat control, traffic signal, and typewriter; and

4 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished
5 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington
6 Carver, Matthew Hansen, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,
7 Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, and,
8 of course, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are noted prominently in
9 the history books of students nationwide, thus enabling them to
10 learn about the important and lasting contributions of these
11 individuals; and

12 WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our
13 society are the members of the African American
14 community—individuals who have been steadfast in their
15 commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for
16 all; now, therefore, be it

17 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
18 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in
19 recognizing February 2015 as Black History Month, urges all
20 citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African
21 Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people
22 of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and
23 contributions that African Americans make to their communities;
24 and be it further

25 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
26 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.